

**House Bill 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium ending June 30, 2023, Department of Developmental Services**

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Amanda Clair, and I am the Outreach and Assistive Technology Coordinator for The Arc of Southington. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the state budget.

I am asking you to honor the long-term plan to address under funding of community nonprofits and increase funding this year by an additional \$461million, or 8% in total for FY23.

Our direct support professionals have worked through a pandemic and were there for our individuals with IDD without hesitation. The pandemic was a scary place for all, but our staff showed up everyday and worked long hours to provide exceptional care. Agencies like ours are now in competition with employers such as Amazon and Walmart that require no specialized training, are paying more, and offering more hiring incentives. This is a direct hit to non-profits like us. Many families are desperate to place their loved ones in day programs or residential settings, but we cannot hire enough staff to provide services to these families due to competition and staffing shortages.

The wage compression is a nationwide issue and must be addressed because it is devaluing to our dedicated Direct Support Professionals and harmful to the profession.

The increase in this year's budget is extremely appreciated. However, with rising costs over the last year due to a 6% increase in inflation, the increase does not cover the rising costs for vehicles, gas, food, heat, and utilities.

Please support additional funding of \$461 million for the Connecticut safety net. I thank you for your time today.

Amanda Clair  
The Arc of Southington